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BT
UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 HALIFAX 0631

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TAGS: PARM, PREL, PGOV, ECPS, CA
SUBJECT: JOINT PARLIAMENTARY HEARING ON CANADIAN
PARTICIPATION IN SDI RESEARCH
REF: OTTAWA 05405; HALIFAX 0623

1. SUMMARY: HALIFAX HEARING OF JOINT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON CANADIAN PARTICIPATION IN SDI RECEIVED MUCH ATTENTION IN PRESS, WHICH FOCUSED PRIMARILY ON THE NAGATIVE OPINIONS PRESENTED. WOMENS, VETERANS AND PEACE GROUPS GAVE TESTIMONY AGAINST SDI, CONSIDERING IT AN EXPENSIVE AND DANGEROUS "FANTASY"---A WASTE OF MONEY AND DESTABILIZING ESCALATION OF ARMS RACE. JOBS AND TECHNOLOGICAL BENEFITS FRIM SDI RESEARCH WERE CONSIDERED BY THEM AS SECONDARY TO RISKS OF "MILITARIZING SPACE" AND PREEMPTIVE US NUCLEAR ATTACK ON USSR. SOLE ADVOCATE OF SDI CITED TECHNOLOGICAL BENEFITS OF RESEARCH, AND SOVIETS PRESENT DEFENSIVE RESEARCH EFFORT. NDP AND LIBERAL MPS VOICED CONCERN THAT GOVERNMENT HAD ALREADY MADE DECISION TO PARTICIPATE, AND THAT EFFORT TO GUAGE PUBLIC OPINION WAS "SHAM." ONLY PRESS EDIT ON SUBJECT WAS SKEPTICAL THAT RESULTS OF HEARING REPRESENTED PUBLIC OPINION. END SUMMARY.

2. THE JOINT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS HELD SECOND PART OF ITS HEARINGS ON TUESDAY, JULY 16 TO ASSESS PUBLIC OPINION ON CANADAS PARTICIPATION IN SDI. MOST TESTIMONY WAS OPPOSED TO PARTICIPATION. SEVERAL ARTICLES IN JULY 17 HALIFAX "CHRONICLE HERALD" COVERED HEARINGS. ARTICLE ENTITLED "NOVA SCOTIA GIVES RESOUNDING NO TO STAR WARS" REPORTED OPINIONS OF SEVERAL GROUPS. MARION KIERNS OF COALITION OF CANADIAN WOMENS GROUPS CALLED SDI A WASTE OF MONEY AND AN ESCALATION OF THE ARMS RACE. GILLIAN THOMAS OF VOICE OF WOMEN

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CALLED IT "FANTASY", AND CONSIDERED IT AS LEADING TO MILITARIZATION OF SPACE. SHE WENT ON TO SAY THAT BOTH AMERICAN AND CANADIAN SCIENTISTS HAVE SAID IT WILL NOT WORK, AND THAT SPACE WEAPONS WOULD TEMPT US INTO MAKING PREEMPTIVE FIRST STRIKE. CUTHBERT GIFFORD OF VETERANS FOR MULTILATERAL NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT ALSO CALLED IT "FANTASY" REFLECTING REAGAN ADMINISTRATIONS GOAL OF MAKING US "DOMINANT WORLD POWER". HE SAID CANADA SHOULD NOT LEAVE ITS TRADITIONAL DISARMAMENT ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND THAT PARTICIPATING IN ORDER TO PROVIDE JOBS FOR CANADIANS WAS "PROSTITUTION". ANTHONY LAW OF PROJECT PLOUGHSHARES SAID THAT CANADA SHOULD COME UP WITH NEW INITIATIVE FOR REAL DISARMAMENT TALKS.

3. FRONT PAGE ARTICLE IN SAME EDITION QUOTED LIBERAL SENATOR PHILIPPE GIGANTES OF COMMITTEE AS CALLING SDI "INSANE", SAYING IT WOULD CREATE LARGER ARMS RACE AS BOTH SUPERPOWERS TRIED TO AMASS OFFENSIVE SUPERIORITY TO GET AROUND DEFENSIVE SYSTEMS. DAN MIDDLEMISS, POLITICAL SCIENTIST OF DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY, STRESSED CAUTION. WHILE ADMITTING THAT TECHNICAL GAINS FROM SDI WERE TO BE HAD, AND THAT IT WAS POLITICALLY IMPORTANT TO SIDE WITH US BECAUSE OF POSSIBLE AMERICAN RETRIBUTION, HE SAID THAT CANADA SHOULD DEFINE WHAT ITS INTERESTS ARE AND FACE UNCERTAINTY, BECAUSE ONCE IN, CANADA MAY NOT BE ABLE TO GET OUT.

4. SAME ARTICLE REPORTED ON TESTIMONY OF RETIRED VICE ADMIRAL J ANDREW FULTON, ONLY SPEAKER TO GIVE UNQUALIFIED SUPPORT TO SDI PARTICIPATION. HE SAID THAT IF CANADA DID NOT TAKE PART, IT WOULD LOSE OUT ON BENEFITS OF RESEARCH AND WOULD FALL BEHIND IN MILITARY AND
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